

# FIVE YEARS OF AMERICAN RULE IN HAWAII

BY MATLOCK CAMPBELL



Harold Hayselden's Residence, Matlock Avenue, 6 Rooms.

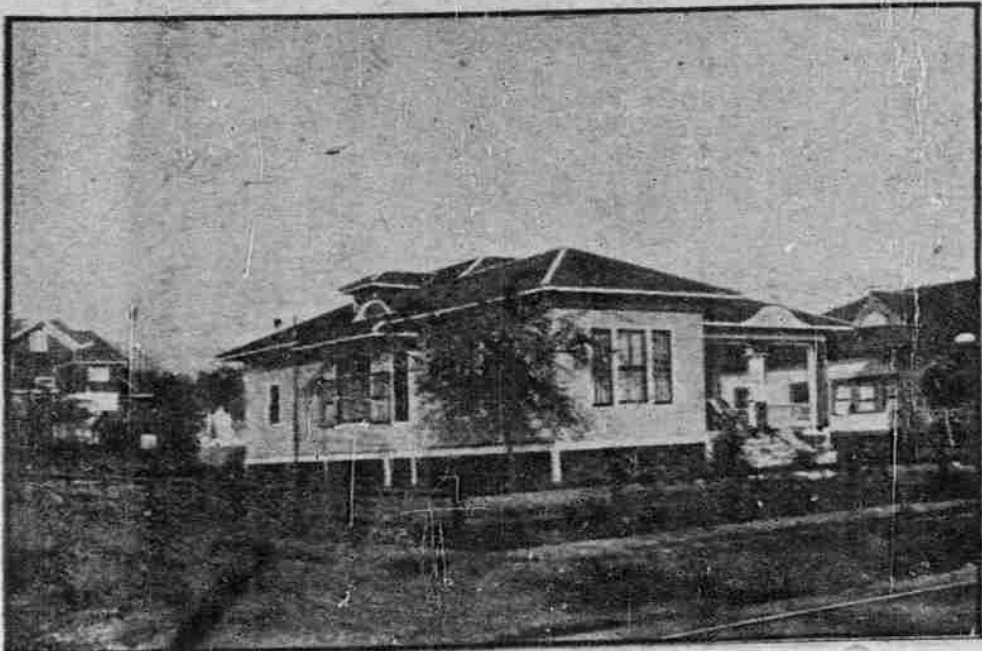
To observers visiting Honolulu in the early part of 1899, and not again until the close of 1904, it would be difficult to realize that the Honolulu of today was the same city which they had formerly visited, so great have been the changes wrought by the hustling American under five years of Uncle Sam's rule.

Yet to its residents who have remained here during that period, so methodically have these improvements developed that few stop to appreciate their true significance. In fact, there are those who hesitate to acknowledge that any change has been made for the better, sorrowfully refer to the "good days." But in order to adequately compare former Honolulu in its quaint, picturesque and languid condition, with the modern, up-to-date, progressive city of today, I must beg the readers' indulgence while I recall the impressions and incidental experiences attending my first visit to Honolulu and my later sojourn made just prior to annexation.

For nearly a year I had been filling a business engagement on the island of Hawaii, having gone there direct from San Francisco. Wishing to visit this city on my return, I took the local steamer "Kinau" at Mahukona and arrived here on Sunday at 4 a. m., August 10, 1897. I had planned to take one of the Oriental steamers which was scheduled to arrive at Honolulu on the following Tuesday morning, thus giving me two days to explore the city. On going ashore I found the air heavily charged with ozone which in a tropical climate is always evidence that there has been a recent shower; and as I strolled up the dark streets in the early dawn, I was conscious of some unknown fragrance abroad in the air which filled me with feelings of happy expectancy. I seemed to be in a land of enchantment even before the buildings and trees took definite shape. But as the sun arose with the approach of day a most charming transformation developed on every hand. The raindrops hung on the trees, making the leaves look as though they were studded with golden diamonds; and these trees seemed to be growing indiscriminately on a great many of the streets and in the sidewalks. As I passed along one of the thoroughfares in the heart of the city I found myself under a canopy of broad-leaved trees that grew on each side of the street, 50 feet high, and whose limbs interlaced overhead; and that I was literally walking on a carpet of brilliant fallen flowers. Looking upward, I saw that this variety of tree, which resembled the California cypress, was so heavily laden with flowers that the green leaves were almost wholly obscured; and as the bright sun's rays struck the rich red and yellow colored petals the tree looked as though it were on fire.

I was so enraptured with the picturesque-ness of every thing that morning that it never occurred to me to seek accommodations at a hotel. I strolled on and on until I came to a park which was enclosed with a high iron fence, the gates being guarded by Hawaiian soldiers. On inquiry, I was informed that it was the "Palace grounds," and, indeed, I could easily distinguish a massive building standing back among the trees. The grounds themselves, with their great variety of beautiful palms, Norway firs, banyan trees, and stately royal palms, dozens of varieties of the croton and other bushes, with their variegated, brilliant-hued leaves, also the bougainvillea vine, climbing 40 feet high over large trees with purple tipped leaves—all seemed to cast a glow, presenting a most magnificent flower garden on a grand scale.

Going out King street, I found myself entering a residential section of the city, revealing well-kept private grounds enclosed with magnificent hibiscus hedges and forests of every known variety of tropical trees and great climbing ferns, with leaves three feet long, growing to the very tops of trees 50 feet high. The great, noble "monkey pod," with its broad branches covering half acres, a hundred figs, mangoes, bananas, vams, guavas, oranges, bread fruit, papaya and dozens of other varieties of unknown fruits.



Residence of Edward Madden, Corner King Street and Elsie Avenue, 6 Rooms.

At this point I came in sight of the tall graceful coconut, with its crooked, sky-rocket shaped stem growing 60 and 80 feet high, holding its head far aloft from everything else. This graceful tree lent more to the picturesque features of the city than any other form of tree or shrub. Here my wanderings were cut short for I learned that the steamer I was to take for San Francisco was off port, two days ahead of time, and reluctantly I soon found myself aboard the S. S. China.

This beautiful Paradise which I had discovered soon disappeared below the horizon, but not the vision which had made such a lasting impression upon me. It was a strange fate that again found me steaming into the harbor of Honolulu less than two years later. A second time I had visited Hawaii and again returned by way of Honolulu; but this time I was determined to stay long enough to thoroughly explore the place. I arrived on Easter Sunday at 4 p. m. early in April, 1899, experiencing a very rough trip on board the famous steamer "Kinau" and found that the boat's reputation for acrobatic performances in a choppy sea was well earned for she indulged in such disgraceful gymnastics that she shocked the feelings of all the passengers, and never condescended to stop, even in the harbor of Kihel, where, according to the sworn statement of an old seaman—a fellow passenger—she turned a complete somersault during the night while at anchor in the harbor.

As a round bottom stomach pump, she was a huge success. So much so, that when I arrived in Honolulu I was not physically in condition to indulge in sight seeing, and so endeavored to find lodgings in the hotels, but to my chagrin found that all accommodations were engaged. This was occasioned in part by would-be speculators from the other islands and from the coast, who had been attracted here by the sugar boom in anticipation of annexation. So I started out in quest of private lodgings, and although it was Sunday morning, could not but help noticing that there was an air of business about the place that was not evident on my former visit.

But what struck me as particularly unusual was that not one person in twenty whom I met was wholly of my own race. There were the Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians, Polynesians, and an unlimited assortment of crosses among these; and the style of their dress was as varied as their complexion. Wandering, I found myself at the Palace Grounds, and this time the gates were open and the soldiers gone. On entering to find a seat in order to doze off the effect of the sea trip, I soon saw that I was not the only one who had sought for a nap in a park seat in lieu of unobtainable beds; one poor fellow telling me that he had been there all night. I must have dozed for several hours when I was awakened by a church bell, and guided by its tones, entered a magnificent house of worship, built of lava stone. To my great joy, I saw that I was in the midst of an assemblage of my own race; and although I did not know a soul in that packed throng, felt as though I was among well known friends. To me it was the most inspiring service I had ever attended. It was Easter, and the pulpit rostrum and choir gallery were exquisitely decorated with palm leaves, ferns and flowers in gorgeous array.

Never before had I beheld any thing so extravagant in decorations, even in California, and strange to say, the last hymn of the service sung was "America." It thrilled my very soul with love of home, and patriotism, and effectually cured my seasickness. Securing lodgings that afternoon in a private family, I decided to remain two or three weeks—and I am here yet. On going into the heart of the city next morning, I could not but notice the narrow unequal width of the streets and their crookedness, and the little narrow sidewalks (if they could be dignified by that name) with their offsets in some places

ending abruptly against brick and stone walls.

Noticing strange looking vehicles occasionally coming along the streets, each drawn by a pair of under-sized donkeys, and dignified by the name of the Hawaiian Tramway Company as shown on the sides in large letters, I hailed one of them, and on entering, noticed that it was one of the antiquated "Put your fare in the box on entering and ring the bell when you wish to get off" pattern of street cars. Opening the front door, I asked the Portuguese driver who, like the donkeys, was also undersized, to take me to the end of the line. When he asked which end, I replied, "Any end," as long as he did not require me to go too near the business end of his donkey engine which, by this time, through the general exertion of the driver with his worn-out stick, was getting up a frightful commotion. One of the donkeys was galloping stiff-legged, his hind stanchions lifting the height of the dashboard at every jump, the other donkey was going at a pull neck trot with his head and ears down, while the general clanging of trace chains and the car itself, lurching wildly from side to side as if in imitation to the galloping donkey, presented a combination terrifying to the nerves.

As I had noticed no evidence of alarm on the countenances of the other passengers, although they were holding on like grim death, I did not attempt to jump, and concluded, that it was all in getting used to it.

I had noticed a portly Hawaiian lady holding on to the bell strap for some time, when suddenly she pulled it with great force and the bell rang at the wrong end of the car. On account of the terrible racket the car, donkeys, and driver were making the latter named part of the combination failed to hear the bell. Two of the passengers volunteered to help the old lady by going to the front door, but this was a perilous undertaking, for we were moving by this time at a high rate of speed in almost every direction. By heroic efforts however, in hanging at the door which would not open, the driver discovered that something seriously was

investment, and that such a system properly operated would carry 1000 passengers to where he carried ten now, he replied with a wise laugh, that his service had proved adequate to accommodate such of the public as choose to ride on his trams, and that the popular fad in Honolulu was to ride in hacks. Even the natives, said he, who earned \$6.00 per week would spend \$4.00 of it to ride in hacks and live on the other \$2.00. And indeed one could see these rubber-tired one-horse hacks going in every direction, whirling around street corners, but like Pain's trams always turning to the left.

Deciding that by owning a wheel I would have less Pain in my travels about the streets of Honolulu as I found it too expensive to join the popular fad of going in hacks, I bought one, but soon found that on account of the fearful conditions of the streets which were cross rutted and full of depressions, that I was going like a bucking horse, on my wheel. And as every one turned to the left I found myself in all kinds of mixups, one time having to jump and cling to the neck of a horse to keep from being run over.

There was but one section of level street, less than two blocks long on Vineyard to which I frequently went, ten blocks out of my way, for the privilege of having a little comfort in riding. Going along the streets upon warm days, one used to encounter nauseating odors in most parts of the city, occasioned by the poor sanitation, there being no sewers.

The Post Office was only open through limited hours of the day, and one going to the delivery window on the arrival of a steamer, would have to stand in line for half or three fourths of an hour, to receive mail. There was no free delivery, or letter boxes to drop mail into.

Such was Honolulu five years ago. But the wheels of progress were already at work for the live American was here with his tools and instruments, and the conservative "whatever we do we do well" Englishman to assist.

Many substantial business men who had resided here for years and who had been handicapped through adverse leg-



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the matter. He therefore brought his car to such a sudden halt by some kind of lock brake which he applied, that the rear end, wheels and all, raised six inches off the track, coming down with a bump. Then, as the driver, with stocial countenance, opened the door to inquire the cause of the commotion inside, I noticed that the aforesaid mentioned galloping donkey had been flung around end for end, turning the limited harness, wrong side out, so great had been the momentum. It is but just to say that the portly lady had been carried over two blocks past her street.

The driver, after disentangling his telescoped donkeys, drove on until he found himself opposite a fruit store where he leisurely tied up and as leisurely went to the store. He selected a bunch of bananas and purchased same, and as leisurely returned eating his fruit as he came back, all of which time took at least five minutes.

In thus relating my first tram ride in Honolulu, I have not exaggerated what was the common every day experience of a great many passengers. I have gone two blocks in these cars when the wheels were off the track, after a storm, which had been occasioned by sand washed on the rails. And I have seen well dressed ladies and men too, when we got so stuck in the mud that further progress was impossible, dutifully take off their shoes and step off into water and mud two feet deep and vanish in the darkness as we were coming home from church.

After I had been in Honolulu a few weeks, I found myself one day seated beside a heavy bearded fellow passenger and said to him, after having gone through some nerve wrecking experience in consequence of the cars antics, that I hoped people of Honolulu would soon possess a decent car service. I was promptly informed that I was talking to Mr. Pain, the manager of the Hawaiian Tramways Co. Upon my asking him why in the name of common humanity he did not install an electric system, suggesting that it would pay him better dividends than any sugar

isolation of an unstable government were unable to better conditions. And McKinley's authorization of annexation which had been made the year before, had been hailed with joy.

And what has been accomplished? The narrow, crooked, uneven streets have been straightened and widened, and miles of them have been beautifully macadamized, curbed and lined with concrete sidewalks. Dozens of magnificent and substantial business blocks some of them five and six stories high, that would grace any up-to-date American city on the mainland, have replaced the old one-story wooden rookeries. The city has been sewer and cross-sewered from end to end, and the best sanitary laws in the world put into operation, rendering it next to impossible for epidemics and germs of disease to thrive as formerly.

With the free letter delivery system which has been installed, one has mail delivered at the doors in the remotest parts of the city, and instead of having to take half a day off as formerly to go down town to post a letter, one can drop it into a box on any block, and the Post Office is kept open night and day.

But most to be appreciated of all is the street car service with its solid road beds laid with 85 lbs. to the yard rails, and its unique palace cars which glide along smoothly like a fast sailing yacht, no "crickety crack snap, crickety crack snap," as one experiences when going over the rails on lines in coast cities. And these cars which fairly terrify the city streets, and running every ten minutes on most of the lines, carry 1000 to Pain's ten,—and this in the face of the fact that there are 10,000 less people in Honolulu today than five years ago. If one wishes to stop at this street, he has only to reach his hand a few inches and gently push the button. No craning of the neck, and wailing straining of the body to catch the conductors attention as in coast systems. But not all improvements, that have been under efficient control of public



Residence of J. G. Pratt, Pacific Heights, 9 Rooms.

every direction constantly, have been accomplished without the use of the port confined to Honolulu alone. They extend all over throughout the islands, of thousands yearly. These sums formerly went to help fill the common pot but with annexation have gone to Uncle Sam's coffers at Washington. Where did all of the money formerly go to in the good old times and for what purpose was it used? Small wonder there was a Revolution of 1893.

In closing this summary, too much praise cannot be extended to Governor Carter, who has proven himself, by his high executive ability and noble ideals, to be fully able to cope with the problems of reorganization which he has so fearlessly undertaken.

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One surprising fact is that this great revolution in public works has been ac-

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